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SIPDIS

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EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL/MEDEARIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ENVIRONMENT MINISTER EAGER TO MOVE AHEAD WITH
AGENDA

REF: 2004 AMMAN 08087

[1](#)1. This is an Action Request for EPA--see para. 8 for action requested.

[1](#)2. Summary: Newly-appointed Environment Minister Khalid Irani hopes to revamp his Ministry and transform it into a regulatory agency not charged with managing directly all aspects of Jordan's environment. One of the tools he hopes to use is privatizing some functions currently handled by the Ministry. Among the specific projects he is reviewing are the impact of the expiration in 2008 of the contract for Jordan's petroleum refinery and establishing an industrial waste treatment facility in the north of the country. Irani is also eager to move ahead with the agenda agreed to in the U.S.-Jordan Joint Environmental Forum held in September 2004 (Reftel). End Summary.

[1](#)3. On April 19, Charge called on newly-appointed Environment Minister Khalid Irani. Irani had previously headed the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and has been a close contact of both the Embassy and the USAID Mission in Jordan. Irani has an energetic agenda of reforms and projects planned, aimed at the structure and responsibilities of the ministry itself and at specific projects with environmental ramifications.

[1](#)4. Irani said that he hopes to develop an environmental code within the Ministry itself covering everything from water use to energy conservation. He hopes he can extend such a code for use by other government ministries.

[1](#)5. On a more strategic level, he will focus on a National Environmental Action Plan. He hopes to change the ministry into more of a regulatory and monitoring body, one not burdened with serving as a centralized manager of all environmental decisions in the country. He also hopes to be able to privatize some of the functions of the Ministry. In terms of public relations, he hopes to launch a campaign emphasizing the importance of economic considerations in environmental protection and management. He is also interested in promoting the positive aspects of environmental protection, not only in eco-tourism but in the use of green production techniques in manufacturing. In the latter case, perhaps the US FDA could play a role.

[1](#)6. Regarding specific projects, he will focus on managing the expiration of the government's contract with the Jordan Petroleum Refinery in Zarqa in 2008. Important issues include the pollution generated by the facility itself and the need to shift to the production of unleaded gasoline for the domestic market. He also hopes to establish an industrial waste treatment facility in the north of the country.

[1](#)7. Regarding the issues outstanding from the September 2004 Joint Environmental Forum meeting, Irani is very interested in moving ahead with the proposal to second an environmental economist to the Ministry. The Ministry also continues to need capacity-building and assistance in developing environmental policies and regulations.

[1](#)8. Action Requested for EPA: Please advise on the status of the Jordanian request that a USG environmental economist be seconded to the Ministry of Environment.

HALE